

many of their plans. Everyone continues to be inspired by Gabby's recovery, by Mark's devotion, and by the courage it took for their family to re-enter public life and public service. But that is who Mark Kelly is—a devoted and honorable man—and we are delighted to welcome him to the Senate Democratic caucus and the wider Senate family.

So a fond adieu to my friend LAMAR, and a fond welcome to my new friend Mark Kelly.

I have some more remarks on the topics, but I think I will defer those, with unanimous consent that I could talk about those later, so we can get right to Senator ALEXANDER's remarks at the 10:30 scheduled time.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kyle Hauptman, of Maine, to be a Member of the National Credit Union Administration Board for a term expiring August 2, 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank my friend Mitch, and I thank my friend Chuck for their remarks. I will have more to say to them later.

On March 9, 1967, Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., the newly elected Senator from Tennessee, made his maiden address, his first speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate. He spoke for too long.

The Republican leader of the Senate, who was also Baker's father-in-law, Senator Everett M. Dirksen, walked over to congratulate him and then said, "Howard, occasionally, you might enjoy the luxury of an unexpressed thought," which is good advice for a farewell address as well.

As Senator Baker's legislative assistant, I was also his speech writer for that maiden address, or at least I thought I was. He had developed a bad habit of not saying what I wrote for his speech. So I asked to see him, and I said: Do we have a problem with our relationship?

He said: No, we have a perfect relationship. You write what you want to

write, and I will say what I want to say.

I learned a couple of other things about "saying what I want to say." One came from Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," who heard me speak once and called me aside afterward and said: May I make a suggestion? He said: If, when you begin a speech, you would start by saying, "Instead of making a speech, let me tell you a story," someone might actually listen to what you have to say.

And then, from David Broder, who gave this advice to Ruth Marcus when she got her column for the Washington Post: one idea per column.

So here is a story about my one idea for this speech.

In August of 1968, Senator Baker was in the Republican leader's office, where Senator McConnell is today. He overheard this conversation. Senator Dirksen was saying:

[No.] Mr. President, I cannot come down and have a drink with you tonight. I did that last night and Louella is very unhappy with me.

About 30 minutes later, there was a commotion out in the hall, and in the door of the Republican leader's office came two beagles, three Secret Service men, and the President of the United States. And Lyndon Johnson said to Everett Dirksen: "Everett, if you won't come down and have a drink with me, I'm here to have one with you." And they disappeared into the back room.

Later that same year, around a long table, in that same office, the Democratic President and the Republican leader worked out the Civil Rights Act of 1968. It took 67 votes to break a filibuster, but when the bill passed and Johnson signed it, the Senators who voted no went home and said: It is the law. We have to accept it.

And it still is today, along with many other civil rights laws.

So that is the one idea I have for this speech. Our country needs a U.S. Senate to work across party lines to force broad agreements on hard issues, creating laws that most of us have voted for and that a diverse country will accept.

In the 1930s, we needed a Senate to create Social Security; after World War II, the United Nations; in the 1960s, Medicare; in 1978, to ratify the Panama Canal Treaty; in 2013, more recently, to tie interest rates for student loans to the market rates, saving student borrowers hundreds of billions of dollars in the last several years; in 2015, to fix No Child Left Behind.

That bill had 100 alligators in the swamp. The Wall Street Journal said, when we finished, that it was the largest evolution of power from Washington to the States in 25 years. When President Obama signed it, he said it was "a Christmas miracle" because, in the end, 85 Senators voted for it. In 2016, as Senator McConnell mentioned, there was the 21st Century Cures Act, moving medical miracles faster to patients and into doctors' of-

fices. That bill ran off the track every 2 or 3 days. On one of those days, I called the Vice President, Joe Biden. I said: Joe, I am stuck in the White House. I have the President's personalized medicine in this. I have your Cancer MoonShot. Senator McConnell's regenerative medical proposal is in it. Speaker Ryan has worked out a way to pay for it. But I can't get the White House to move. I feel like the butler standing outside the Oval Office with a silver platter, and nobody will open the door and take the order.

And Joe Biden said: If you want to feel like the butler, try being Vice President.

Well, in the next few weeks, the Senate rules literally forced us to come to an agreement, and, in the end, we almost all voted for it. Senator McConnell said then, as he said today, it was "the most important legislation" of that Congress. And, today, it is helping to create vaccines and treatments in record time. Then, in 2018, there was a once-in-a-generation change in the copyright laws to help songwriters be fairly paid; this year, the Great American Outdoors Act. Everyone agrees that it is the most important outdoor and environmental bill in 50 years.

All of that took a long time, a lot of palaver, many amendments, many years. Too many years, civil rights advocates, students, patients, songwriters, and conservationists would say. But the point was that those bills didn't just pass. They passed by big margins. The country accepted them, and they are going to be there for a long time, and most of them were enacted during divided government, when the Presidency and at least one body of Congress was of different political parties.

That offers an opportunity to share the responsibility or the blame for doing hard things, like controlling the Federal debt. That is why our country needs a U.S. Senate, to thoughtfully and carefully and intentionally put country before partisanship and personal politics, to force broad agreements on controversial issues that become laws that most of us will vote for and that a diverse country will accept.

Nearly 60 years ago, I had traveled from my home in the mountains of Tennessee to New York University's Law School in Manhattan, on Washington Square. It was my first trip ever to New York City, and I had asked for a roommate whose background was as different from mine as possible. One of those roommates turned out to be a tall skinny guy from New Jersey. When I would go to his home in New Jersey and spend the night—his mother was a seamstress and his dad was a contractor; they were Italian immigrants—his mother would become so concerned about my frayed collar on my one white dress shirt that she would turn it while I slept.

Years later, that roommate, Paul Tagliabue, invited me to go to the Italian American Dinner here in Washington. They were bursting with pride